1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

villagers on a ritual occasion. If the institution of caste has a tendency to lay stress on 'horizontal unity', the harvest festival tends to counterpoise it by stressing the unity of the village.

VI

The nuclear unit of Coorg society is the *okka* or patrilineal joint family, and only the male members of an *okka* have any rights in the ancestral estate. Women born in the *okka* leave it on marriage, while the women who come into it by marriage have extremely limited rights in the ancestral estate. No woman may be head of an *okka*. A Coorg proverb says, 'a woman may not be the head of an *okka*, and a bitch may not be given a share of the game it helps to kill in a hunt'.[1]

Only sons can continue the *okka*. But when there are no sons, a daughter, or widow of a dead son is married in either the *okka parijé* or *makka parijé* way (see pp. 129–30), which has the effect of granting the children of either form of union membership of their mother's natal *okka*. If it is not possible to perpetuate the *okka* in either of these ways, a boy from another *okka* is adopted.

There is a sexual division of labour, men generally doing the work outside the house while women do the work inside. The tasks done by men are in a vague way regarded as superior to those done by women. The men cultivate or supervise the cultivation of land by low-caste labourers. However, agriculture is not, and has never been, their sole occupation. The army has always attracted Coorgs, and nowadays educated Coorgs are to be found in every profession.

Village-assemblies and *nāḍ*-assemblies were formerly vigorous institutions and only men normally took part in them. The men went in annual caravans to Malabar, in the dry season, to sell their surplus rice and buy salt, jaggery, coconut, coconut oil, tobacco, and fish. They also had the privilege and duty of conducting the elaborate festivals of village-deities and calendar festivals such as the harvest festival.

Coorg women's activities are on the whole confined to the house. They cook food for the twenty or thirty members of the *okka*. They look after the children and servants, the storing of food, the raising of pig and fowl, and so on. The younger women have to bring

[1] Even today at a collective hunt bitches are not entitled to any share in the meat of the hunted animal, while each of the dogs is given a share.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

which he was a member.[1] In addition to this, recent changes in Hindu law, which apply to Coorgs also, have been such as to encourage individual acquisition at the expense of the *okka*.

The ancient custom of Coorgs recognized individual property only to a very limited extent, and that too only in movables. For instance, the younger members of an *okka* could cultivate, in the non-paddy season, and after they had contributed their daily quota of work to the joint estate, crops like ginger and turmeric. When these were sold a share was given to the *okka* for having provided the land on which they were grown.

The encouragement given to the ideas of partition and individual acquisition, the uprooting of Coorgs from their ancestral estates owing to the new political and economic structure stretching all over India, and the growing appeal of individualist ideas to the people, are all adversely affecting the solidarity of the *okka*. The elementary family, which was a weak entity in the traditional structure, is emerging with greater distinctness nowadays.

IX

In a sense, only men are full members of the *okka*, but such rights as women do possess in it are of paramount importance to them, and the granting of these rights in the bridegroom's *okka* is the crucial point in the marriage ritual. The granting of rights to the bride in the groom's *okka* is accompanied by the severance of her connexion with her natal *okka*. But such severance is not complete and irrevocable. The entire process is symbolized in the transference of twelve pebbles from the bride's natal *okka* to her conjugal *okka*.

After marriage, then, a girl is a member of her conjugal *okka*, and her membership does not become extinct even if she becomes a widow. She is entitled to stay in her conjugal home and to be maintained out of its income. She has also the right to be buried after death in its burial-ground.

The bride is given membership in the groom's *okka*, and not rights in the groom's share in the ancestral property of his *okka*. The entire idea of an individual having a share in the ancestral property of his *okka* is a comparatively recent introduction into Coorg law. Traditionally, the immovable property of an *okka*

[1] G. Richter, *Manual of Coorg*, p. 130.

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was both inalienable and impartible. But when partition did actually take place, it was done with the consent of all the members.

Nowadays, occasionally, a Coorg widow who is marrying her dead husband's younger brother is given rights anew in the *okka* of her new husband. This novel custom proceeds from the idea referred to above, that the bride is only given rights in her husband's share of his *okka's* property. It indicates, however, the growing importance of the elementary family among Coorgs.

When, however, the widow wants to marry someone who is not a member of her dead husband's *okka*, her connexion with the latter is first of all ritually broken. She then reverts to her natal *okka*, and at her new marriage her connexion with her natal *okka* is ritually severed, and rights are granted to her in her (new) husband's *okka*.

That is to say, a woman is compensated for the lack of the same quality of rights which a man has in his natal *okka* by the fact that she always enjoys a double membership: she never completely ceases to be a member of her natal *okka*, and at the same time she is a member of her husband's *okka*. She can go back to it under certain circumstances like widowhood or divorce.

Membership of the *okka* is extremely important, and lack of membership in some *okka* or other is tantamount to social extinction. Elders consequently try hard to see that the children of extra-marital alliances get berthed somewhere. It is right and proper that the father of the children should secure them membership of his *okka*, but if for some reason or other he cannot be persuaded to do so, the children are made members of their mother's *okka*.

X

The wife of the headman of the *okka* is the mistress of the household. She is called '*manépaṇikārti*' (house-work-woman). Ideally, all the women in the *okka* have to work under her guidance. The relationship between the various women in the joint family is frequently one of conflict. There is first of all the relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, which is celebrated in Coorg and other South Indian folklore as one of conflict. In a society where the sexes are segregated even inside the household and where elders are very highly respected, the mother-in-law,

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V

THE CULT OF THE *OKKA*

I

THE *okka* or the patrilineal and patrilocal joint family is the basic group among Coorgs. It is impossible to imagine a Coorg apart from the *okka* of which he is a member. It affects his life at every point and colours all his relations with the outside world. People who do not belong to an *okka* have no social existence at all, and the elders always bring pressure on the parties concerned to see that children born out of wedlock obtain membership in their father's or mother's *okka*.

Membership of an *okka* is acquired by birth, and the outside world always identifies a man with his *okka*. His association with his *okka* does not cease even after death, because he then becomes one of a body of apotheosized ancestors (*kāraṇava*) who are believed to look after the *okka* of which they were members when alive. The ancestors are worshipped, and offerings of food and drink (*bhāraṇi*) are occasionally made to them.

Formerly the boys in an *okka*, all sons of agnatically related males, grazed the *okka's* cattle together, hunted birds, and played games. When they grew up all of them jointly looked after the ancestral estate under the guidance of the head of the *okka*.

Membership of an *okka* determines to a very large extent the choice of a spouse. First of all, marital relations are forbidden between members of the same *okka*. Where agnation overflows the *okka*, the taboo extends to agnatic relatives who are not members of the *okka*. Again, children of sisters may not intermarry.

The ancestral, immovable property of an *okka* was formerly regarded as impartible. It usually descended from one generation of agnatically related males to another without being split up in the process. Partition did, however, occur when every adult member of the *okka* wanted it. But such cases were unusual—at least that is what one is told. Both the difficulty of partition and the preference for leviratic unions added to the strength of the *okka*.

Offices like the headmanship of a village or *nāḍ* or temple were

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conjugal *okka* and reverts to her natal *okka*. Such reversion is automatic and not conditional upon the unanimous consent of the members of her natal *okka*. But if a woman has been divorced for a grave offence, her natal *okka* might decide to have nothing to do with her.

4. Children of unsanctioned unions are referred to as *mai kaṇat makka* and they do not enjoy membership of their father's *okka* as legitimate children do. In fact, they are not members of any *okka*. Usually, however, elders bring pressure on the lover's kindred to the grant of membership for the children in the lover's *okka*. But if this is impossible, the children are made members of their mother's natal *okka*.

If the children of an unsanctioned union and their mother are given membership in the lover's *okka* while both the woman and her lover are still alive it is called *bendu* (relative) *parijé*. If, however, the father dies before the children and their mother have been given *sammanda* in his *okka*, then the elders try to see that *sammanda* is given at least before the corpse is disposed of. Such a belated granting of membership is called *kuṭṭa* (funeral pyre) *parijé*. This enables the widow to take part in the funeral rites.

5. A boy from outside is adopted when there are no agnatic descendants in an *okka*. *Sammanda* is performed, giving the boy in question membership of the heirless *okka*.

6. Adoption is not, however, necessary if there is an unmarried girl (or even the widow of a dead member) in the *okka* without an heir. The girl is then married according to the custom of *okka parijé* by which the children of the marriage become members of their mother's natal *okka*. The man himself ceases to be a member of his natal *okka* and becomes instead a member of his wife's natal *okka*.

The institution of *makka* (children) *parijé* is resorted to when it is impossible to find a man willing to leave his natal *okka* and become a member of the heirless *okka*. *Makka parijé* is a sanctioned union between the daughter of the heirless *okka* and a man who, while remaining a member of his natal *okka* and performing his duties by it, also agrees to raise up seed for the heirless *okka*. He usually stays in his natal home and visits his *makka parijé* 'wife' only occasionally. The children of this alliance are members of their mother's *okka*. It is usual for the *makka parijé* 'husband' to have a wife married to him in the normal way and living with him in his natal home. The children of the latter union, unlike the children of

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makka parijé alliance, belong to their father's *okka*. Thus the *makka parijé* husband remains a member of his *natal* okka with a wife living with him, and in addition to this he undertakes to raise up seed for another *okka* which has no male heirs, but has instead only an unmarried girl. He only occasionally visits his *makka parijé* wife. *Makka parijé* has the sanction of custom behind it and it has to be distinguished clearly from extra-marital alliances which are disapproved.

7. Children normally and usually belong to their father's *okka*. Consequently the children of a divorcée, or a widow who wants to marry someone not belonging to her late husband's *okka*, do not follow their mother but continue to remain in their natal home. In certain exceptional circumstances, however, the children of a widow or divorcée are allowed to become members of their mother's natal *okka*. The unanimous consent of the children's natal *okka* as well as that of their mother's natal *okka* is required in order to effect the transfer. If such consent is forthcoming from both sides the children's rights in their natal *okka* are ritually severed, after which they are given *sammanda* in their mother's natal *okka*. The marriage of the widow or divorcée subsequent to the children being given *sammanda* in her natal *okka* does not affect their legal status. They do not follow the mother into her new husband's *okka*. This would again require the unanimous consent of the members of the mother's natal *okka* and her new husband's *okka*.

Rights of membership in an *okka* are an extremely important matter affecting all the members in a variety of ways, social, economic, legal, and ritual. Both the loss as well as the acquisition of a member make a profound difference in the day-to-day interrelations of members. The granting of membership and the loss of membership both become subject to *sammanda* ritual. *Sammanda* dramatically brings home to the parties concerned the implications of granting or withdrawing membership. As *sammanda* is a public occasion, the parties concerned in it will not be able to go back on it at a future date. The ritual that surrounds the giving or withdrawal of *sammanda* rights brings ritual sanctions into operation.

IV

The most frequent form of marriage is 'the marriage of a virgin' (*kanni mangala*), in which the bride leaves her natal *okka* and

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After the dinner is over, the girl is given *sammanda* in the man's *okka*. When the members of the man's *okka* agree to give *sammanda* after the girl has given birth to a baby, both the mother and newly born child are admitted to membership.

Sometimes the agnatic relatives of the man might refuse to give *sammanda* to the woman and her children as long as both the man and woman are alive. But death of one of them might bring about a change in their attitude as the surviving spouse and children have important parts to play in the funeral ritual. If it is the woman who is dead, the giving of *sammanda* enables the corpse to be buried in the man's *okka's* burial-ground.

The members of the genitor's village who are present when *sammanda* is given should be collectively paid witness-money of a rupee.

The procedure which has been described above holds good whether the woman concerned is a spinster or a widow.

IX

A Coorg proverb says, 'When the cattle-shed was destined to come to an end only bull calves were born, and when the *okka* was destined to come to an end only girls were born'. As mentioned earlier, an *okka* is threatened with extinction if there are no male heirs. If, however, there is an unmarried girl in such an *okka* she is married in either the *okka parijé* or *makka parijé* way. In both these forms the children born of the union perpetuate the mother's natal *okka*.

In the *sammanda* ritual performed at an *okka parijé* marriage, the bride's family friend definitely asks the groom's family friend whether in view of the absence of heirs in the bride's *okka* the groom is prepared to stand as 'the trunk' of the bride's *okka*.

No *sammanda* ritual is, however, necessary at a *makka parijé* marriage as the groom does not become a member of the bride's *okka*. A rite is performed which makes clear the implications of the kind of union entered into: the bride's family friend says, 'Since there is no heir in Muthamma's natal *okka*, Ponnappa of such-and-such an *okka* has agreed to unite with Muthamma, and it is the

[844] dinner, barring salt and mustard. The salt and mustard are provided by the affines. The affines and members of the affines' village are invited to this dinner which is called *kūl beppa* (keeping food). After the dinner has been given, the girl's relatives take the girl to her natal home.

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responsibility of Mother Kāvēri and the ancestors of Muthamma's *okka* to see that the couple have sons, and prosper.

It is essential to note that in a *makka parijé*[1] union the husband does not acquire any rights in the *makka parijé* wife's house, except the right to food and clothing during his stay there.

Adoption is resorted to only when there is neither an agnatic male descendant nor an unmarried girl in the *okka*. Formerly, during the time of the Lingāyaṭ Rājas, the ruler's permission was necessary for an adoption, and for an *okka parijé* or *makka parijé* union. This was because these devices could be used to shut out a distant agnatic male relative. But it is certain that the local elders would have tried to prevent an adoption to defraud a distant agnatic kinsman.

Two of the three devices for ensuring the continuity of an *okka* threatened with extinction because of the lack of agnatic descendants involve the granting of membership to an outside male, while the third does not. But whether membership of the *okka* is granted or not, each of the three customary devices is enveloped in ritual and involves the gathering together of the concerned relatives, family friends, and villagers. The legal and social consequences of each device are made clear at a solemn ritual occasion held in the sacred ancestral house of the *okka* whose continuity is threatened.

X

The implications of marriage, its rights and duties, are made clear at the performance of *sammanda* ritual. Most of the rites performed subsequent to *sammanda* dramatize the transfer of the girl from her natal *okka* to her conjugal *okka*.

To begin with, the groom goes to the bride sitting alone in the kitchen of her natal house, performs *mūrta* to her, and presents her with a purse containing coins (*chila paṇa*). The groom ties the purse to the frontal breast-knot of the bride's *sari*, but before doing so he unties the purse presented earlier by the mother. Thus the purse presented by the groom replaces the purse presented by the bride's mother. The newly created affinal bond replaces the uterine bond. In a patrilocal and patrilineal society,

[1] *Makka parijé* is not restricted to unmarried girls only. For instance, a widow might be called upon to raise up seed for her conjugal *okka* by entering into a *makka parijé* alliance.

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overtly or covertly. But there are other balancing factors: a girl is told from childhood onwards by every elder in her natal household that she should obey her husband and parents-in-law, and that the greatest thing she could do would be to be approved by her affinal kindred. Besides, a man is bound by the most powerful ties to his joint family; and even more important than this is the fact that he does not want to be known as the one who split his joint family.

Where an adult male is entitled to demand his share of the ancestral property, marriage with a stranger girl increases the chances of the division of the joint family. On the other hand, marriage with a relative makes such a division less likely. But among Coorgs certain relatives like the sisters and daughters of agnatically related males and the daughters of one's mother's sisters' daughters are tabooed for marriage. Only cross-cousins remain eligible.

As has already been mentioned, the Coorg *okka* is a very much stronger institution than the joint family of the higher castes of south India. The theory of the impartibility of its traditional property and the preference for leviratic unions buttress it strongly against fission. Add to it the fact that a cross-cousin is commonly chosen for marriage and it becomes almost impregnable.

The departure of a bride from her natal to her conjugal house on the second day of marriage is an occasion charged with emotion: I have seen an adult Coorg brother break down with grief when his sister left for her husband's home after the *sammanda* ceremony. Parents are aware that when they marry their daughter they lose her.

This breaking of the brother-sister bond which is inevitable in a patrilocal society leaves a void which is only filled when the children of the brother and sister intermarry. It may be said that the wound takes a generation to heal. This is only so if it is regarded as an individual instance, as the completion of a single cycle. But it is seen differently if each marriage is regarded as the repayment of a debt incurred a generation ago, as the working out of the principle of reciprocity. The links which are forged today by marriages between two *okkas* are only a continuation of the links which have been forged in the past. The individual instances appear only as points on two or more parallel lines which are linked all the way through. Such a view mitigates the sense of loss which the parents of the girl experience, and also gives them a sense of security as far as the girl is concerned. The prior kinship bonds which prevail

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already and accompanied by the band of the bride's house. The leader of the groom's party is asked to cut down a row of six plantain stems, whereas other relatives are asked to cut down only a row of three stems. The bride's party is treated similarly at the groom's house later.

The fathers of the bride and groom do not meet at marriage. Within a year of the performance of the marriage the bride's natal *okka* invite the groom's father to a feast and the groom's *okka* invite the bride's father to a feast. This is known as 'knowing the relatives' (*bendu ariva*).

The formality which surrounds the relations of the affinal groups lessens with the years. The two groups concerned come together more and more as the years advance and children are born of the marriage. But the formality never totally disappears. Distance and respect may be said to characterize affinal relations for ever. The earlier occasions in which they come together are covered with ritual—ritual respect is scrupulously shown, feasts are given, and gifts are exchanged.

Respect should be shown to parents-in-law, and this is especially required from a girl towards her mother-in-law. A girl does not come very much into contact with her father-in-law, whereas she spends the best part of the day with her mother-in-law, working under the latter's supervision in or about the kitchen.

XIII

The parents of a girl have a right to recover the presents of cloth and vessels which they gave their daughter at her marriage if the girl dies without leaving behind any children in her conjugal *okka*. But if children have been born of the marriage, the mother's personal property goes to them.

The legal position is not, however, as clear as we have made it out to be owing to the fact that lawyers trained in Hindu law have regarded the presents given to the bride by her natal *okka* as *stridhana* (woman's wealth), according to which the movable property presented to a bride by her relatives becomes her own property absolutely. If such an interpretation is accepted, the presents given by Coorg parents to their daughter at her wedding will come to be governed by the same laws as those prevailing among high-caste Hindus all over India. This seems to be another

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instance of the silent and effective transformation of an original Coorg custom into a similar, though not identical, Sanskritic custom.

A girl ought to get married and become a mother, and a mother is honoured among Coorgs. The bond between a mother and child is the most intimate of bonds and this fact expresses itself in ritual. While other relatives, including the infant's father, become free from birth-pollution on the twelfth day, the mother becomes free from pollution only on the sixtieth day. The stronger the bond prevalent the longer is the period of pollution, and this is so in birth as well as death.

When an infant whose milk teeth have not appeared dies, it is buried without ceremony, and a half of a coconut shell containing milk from the mother's breast is kept over the grave. Only the mother is required to take a bath and change into pure clothes.

The special importance of the maternal bond is recognized at marriage also: the mother is the first person to perform *mūrta* to the bride or groom, provided she is not a widow. The mother has to give her money-gift enclosed in a purse, and this is tied to the frontal breast-knot of the bride's *sari*.

It is not only in ritual that the strength of the mother–child bond is acknowledged: a number of proverbs testify to its strength. One compares the motherless child to a crop in drought. Another tells us that the father becomes a firebrand after the mother is dead. In proverbs the mother is the tender figure and she contrasts with the father who is comparatively lacking in affection and fickle. He can be trusted only as long as the mother is alive, and once the mother dies, his affection for his children decreases. He is likely to take up another wife who will be the focus of his interest and attention.

The dependence of children on their mother later gives way to great regard and respect for her, and this fact complicates the husband–wife relationship. A man does not like his wife's criticizing his mother, and even if he discovers that his mother does not treat his wife properly he would be loath to intervene.

The bond prevalent between a mother and her daughter is always a very deep one, and has a great poignancy because the daughter, on marriage, has to leave her natal home for her conjugal home. The mother is aware that her sons have all the rights, privileges, and power in the ancestral house, whereas her daughters have to leave their natal home and spend their lives among people who will, to say the least, be critical of her in the first few years.

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Serial No.	Occasion	Subject of the rights	Where the subject had rights originally	Where now given	Remarks
	their mother's natal *okka*.				their mother's natal *okka*. Such transference requires the unanimous consent of the adult males of both the concerned *okkas*.
5.	Legitimization of a pre- or extra-marital *liaison*:				
	(*a*) *bendu parijé*, when both the parties are alive.	The woman concerned and her children.	The woman is a member of her natal *okka*, whereas her children do not have membership anywhere.	In the *okka* of the genitor.	
	(*b*) *kuṭṭa parijé*, when one of the parties to the *liaison* is dead.	do.	do.	do.	(*b*) The performance of *kuṭṭa parijé* enables the surviving partner to the *liaison* and the children to take part in the funeral rites for the dead person.
6.	(*a*) *Okka parijé*.	Son-in-law.	In his natal *okka*.	In his wife's natal *okka*.	(*a*) The consent of the son-in-law and of all the adult males in his *okka* is necessary to effect the transfer.
	(*b*) *makka parijé*.	do.	do.	do.	(*b*) The son-in-law retains his membership of his natal *okka* in *makka parijé*. The children of both *okka parijé* and *makka parijé* are members of their mother's natal *okka*.

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Serial No.	*Occasion*	*Subject of the rights*	*Where the subject had rights originally*	*Where now given*	*Remarks*
6 (contd.)					
	(*c*) Adoption.	The boy to be adopted.	In his natal *okka*.	In the adoptive *okka*.	Only when there are no agnatically-related males may a stranger be adopted to continue the *okka* threatened with extinction owing to lack of heirs. The adoptive son loses his membership of his natal *okka* and becomes a member of his adoptive *okka*. The consent of all the adult males of the natal *okka* of the adoptive son, and the consent of the caste-elders is necessary for the adoption to be valid.

Marriage Customs and Ceremonies

The marriage customs of the Coorgs are a curious medley of old and new rites, fashions and notions. Formerly, their marriage customs had a communal character. On an auspicious day, a family would call together the whole village, comprising all the families of the rice valleys occupying farm houses, for a feast. The youths would have their ears pierced by the village carpenters to wear ear-rings, and the maidens had rice strewn over their heads. This was called the marriage feast. The whole community feasted together and the younger people were at liberty to go in search of husbands and wives. This communal character has now changed. Young men express their desire to marry to their parents, grandparents, or the senior members of the family, who look out for suitable girls not in any way related to them. All consanguinous unions are prohibited. Among the prohibitions are:

(i) The descendants of the father's side of the same family name.

(ii) The descendants of the mother's sisters.

(iii) Paternal or maternal uncles or aunts.

A friend of each of the contracting parties becomes the intermediary or Aruva and he is the master of the ceremonies. The father of the young man or his elder brother with the Aruva goes to the house of the young woman, where their advent is expected. On a favourable response, the whole house is well swept and cleaned, and a lamp is lit, when the Aruvas on both sides with prominent members of respectable families stand before it, facing each other, and shake hands in token of the inviolable contract having been concluded. Such betrothals are seldom broken. If the bridegroom dies before consummation of the marriage, the bride becomes a widow. She is then entitled to an inheritance and sustenance in the bridegroom's family, and may enter into conjugal relations with his brother or first cousins.

The Coorg weddings generally take place in April and May, when the rice fields are dry and there is little to do. The day for the wedding is fixed in consultation with the local astrologer, and invitations are sent by the Aruvas to the relations of the bride and bridegroom, to the married Coorgs of the same village, to friendly neighbours of other castes, or even to Muhammadans.

On the wedding day at about 9 a.m. the invited guests assemble in festive array at the houses of the bride and bridegroom, and while the women go to the inside of the house and give a helping hand to the mistress, the men are accommodated in the spacious verandah or in temporary sheds in the courtyard and served with pansupari to assist the flow of village

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CHAPTER VIII

COORG (Contd.)

IN the absence of a male issue in a house, a daughter is retained and married to a Coorg on condition that the children born are considered as the children of the wife's, and not of the husband's house. Such a husband may have another wife with children in his own house, and these have no share in the property of the other wife. Polygamy is not forbidden, but is seldom practised. 858 857 595

It is worthy of note that the Coorgs have no priest to preside over the wedding ceremony. There are no religious functions such as those prevailing among the higher Hindu castes. There are some magical acts, which are related here. The bride's hand is grasped in order that she may be delivered into the hands of her husband. She eats with him on the wedding day to create community of life. Marriage ceremonies in all stages of culture are intended to neutralise the dangers and to make the union safe, prosperous and happy. It referred to the permanent joint life of man and woman, and the essence of the union is the joining together of the bridal pair. The practice of throwing rice may have originated in the idea of giving food to the evil influences to induce them to be propitious and to depart It is considered as a token of blessing. In many cases, it seems to have developed into a sympathetic mode of fertility. At one stage of the wedding, the bride veiled approaches the husband, and they see each other. These ideas may explain the origin of the bridal veil. Besides there is sexual shyness, and the ideas associated with women that these are dangerous as well as improper, and so they lead to effeminacy. Accordingly, the bride spends the wedding days with her girl friends and the bridegroom with young men who in the marriage institution are respectively called bridesmaids and groomsmen. 585 [793]

Polyandry

It has been observed that, in warlike races, the clannish feeling and family spirit often predominate over and absorb individual consciousness and personal rights. Among the Coorgs, family property descends not from father to son, as from generation to generation the eldest member acts as the head of the house. In olden times, the Coorgs are said to have lived in a state of general warfare, chief against chief, and Nadu against Nadu. As a relic of that age, the deep trenches which to this day are found intersecting the country in all directions may be considered. In such an age, destruction of life must have been great. But it was of course the male community that principally suffered in the turmoil. The people must soon 174 726 595 [428]

[174 726 595] have been exterminated under such a state of affairs. But if the surviving brothers were to become the rightful husbands of the widows, a second and an undiminished generation might in time take the place of the fallen. In more recent times, the Rajas used to keep a large number of armed men constantly in attendance on themselves. They were absent from home for weeks and months. On their return, their brothers would have to go to the Palace or accompany the Raja on some hunting or fighting expedition. The brothers at home would then take the place of the absent from home and family. [428] It is clear that the law of inheritance by the sister's son is unknown among the Coorgs. This, according to Richter, affords the strongest proof that polyandry is no Coorg custom.

Widow Marriage

587 Widows may remarry. Should any of the deceased husband's brothers choose to marry her, he may do so or she may be married to any other man. By doing so, she acquires the rights of the second husband and relinquishes all interest in her late husband's property, but not in her children. A second marriage is celebrated in a quiet manner and only the nearer relatives and some of the villagers are invited to the marriage feast. The strewing of rice and other ceremonies are dispensed with. After the removal of signs of widowhood, the bride appears in the apparel of married life.

Divorce

586 A man can divorce an unfaithful wife, but a wife has no remedy against her husband in case of his faithlessness. The Takkas, the Aruva of the house, the Takkas of the village, and some members of the wife's family with her Aruva meet in the hall of the husband's house, when as at betrothal the lamp is put between them; and the Aruva solemnly relinquishes the wife's claim to the husband's property. The children remain in the father's house and the unhappy woman returns with all her belongings to the parental roof. It has to be stated to the credit of Coorg women that such events are very rare.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

844 A woman's first confinement takes place at her mother's house whither she returns after the seventh month of pregnancy. There are no professional midwives among them. The women of the household who have
846 experience for their guidance render all the assistance. A few hours after birth she is bathed in very hot water, and with the abdomen well bound up, she is brought to bed in a lying posture in the best room of the house. This practice is quite at variance with what prevails among other Hindus
[783] who relegate a woman in childbirth to an outhouse. Though the period of pollution lasts for seven days, a woman enjoys immunity from all house-

764 **Disposal of the Dead**

783 The Amma Coorgs used to bury the dead which is now being abandoned. Pollution lasts for ten days.

Occupation

241 The Amma Coorgs are agriculturists They do all agricultural operations, ploughing, sowing and harvesting. Both men and women work.

Conclusion

428 The Amma Coorgs follow the Coorgs in point of inheritance. They
771 worship the Hindu deities and observe Hindu holidays. They are inferior
42 to the Coorgs in physical appearance and strength of body. They are now
262 trying to improve their condition. They are strict vegetarians. They
582 marry within the same *gotra* This may eventually hasten their extinction.

[P 69 ff. have not been Processed for this file]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

ing the poor ryots and reducing them to a state of servitude. A wise Government will, however, watch with solicitude the spontaneous development of the reform, and the more it is the work of the people themselves, the surer will be its successful accomplishment.

591 423 178

b. Prescriptive law of inheritance. 428 ●

Sons, grandsons, brothers, brothers' sons, daughters, daughters' sons, cousins and adopted sons have the right of succession to inherit property successively in the order here mentioned. Property, in default of offspring, on the death of a man devolves on his widow; if he leaves a son under age, the widow is his guardian, and takes possession of the property. If the deceased leaves neither wife nor sons, but a grandson and a brother, or a brother's son, the property is divided, provided the family be undivided; but if it be divided the grandson takes possession of the whole property. The law of primogeniture, however, now prevails and division is strictly prohibited.

If the deceased leaves neither wife, nor children, nor grandsons, the property devolves on his brother or his brother's sons, if any, as the nearest relations. In cases where the deceased has left neither wife nor sons nor brothers, but a daughter not married, the relations of the family put her in possession of the property, and dispose of her in marriage, and on her death her husband or her sons inherit it. But if a man dies leaving a daughter not married, and a brother's son or a grandson, the family being undivided, the property used to be liable to a division. In failure of the preceding persons, the property used sometimes to descend to the cousins, and sometimes not, as the Government determined. In cases where the deceased leaves a son under age without relatives to protect him, the Government appoints the head of the village to act as guardian to the boy and to take charge of

429 428 [884]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

429 his patrimony, until he attains his majority, which ranges
428 from 16 to 20 years, according to the maturity of judgment
[884] shewn by the individual, when he puts his ward in possession of it, and renders him an account of receipts and disbursements during the period of his nonage.

428 If the deceased has left no children, the widow adopts a
597 child of her relations, if procurable, or otherwise of her tribe, and he succeeds to the property on his attainment of the proper age, provided he has been adopted formally and according to the usage of the clan.

582 **c. Wedding and married life.**

[178] The marriage-customs of the present day present a curious mixture of old and new rites, fashions and notions.

In ancient times, it would seem, the marriage festivities had a peculiarly communal character. On some great day a family would call together the whole gráma (village), that is all the families of one of the rice-valleys, girt with farm-
[304] houses, to a feast. The youths would have their ears pierced
[335] by the carpenters for earrings, and the maidens had rice strewn upon their heads. This was in those days called the
[574] marriage feast. The whole community feasted together, and the young people were now at liberty to go in search of husbands and wives.

304 In the low country the piercing of the ear is generally
[171] performed by the goldsmith, except in out-of-the-way places, where a goldsmith is not to be found. In such a case another branch of the trade-fraternity, smith or carpenter, may act for
[335] the brother-goldsmith. In Coorg the carpenter has the exclusive privilege of piercing the ears for ornaments.

[582] The girls have their ears pierced in early childhood. When they come of age, the ceremony of putting on their heads some corns of rice is a token of their being free to marry.

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In the same year, at the suggestion of Major Mark Wilks, then Acting Resident at the Mysore Durbar, the boundary between Coorg and Mysore on the Subramanya side was finally adjusted by Mr. Peile and Major Mackenzie to the Rájah's entire satisfaction. 190 stones were ordered to be erected with the Company's mark on the top, that of Mysore on one side and that of Coorg on the other.

Before the end of 1805 Rájammáji, the Rání of Sóde was delivered of a son, who received the name of Sadáshivarája.

Vírarája was now left in the free and full possession of his principality; he lived on the most friendly terms with the Mysore Residents, the Madras Governors, Sir George Barlow and Lord William Bentinck, and the Governor General, the Marquis of Wellesley, from whom he received a splendid sword of honor. About the time his first grandson was born to him at Sóde he was fondly attached to his new wife, Mahadévaráni, who had born him two daughters, and might have lived and died a happy man, if he had had a son and heir, if he had not distrusted his nearest relatives and if his violent temper had not often carried him beyond the bounds of humanity. He lived in constant dread of poison and it is difficult to say, whether the frenzy which seemed at times to seize him was not caused by drugs administered to him in spite of all his caution.

The Rájendranáme, in its conclusion affords a glimpse of the alternations of hope and fear, which agitated the poor Rájah's heart.

Vírarájendra's last will.

The English translation by Lieut. Abercromby, made from the Canarese original of the Rájendranáme in 1808, at Mangalore brings in two additional pages the last will of Vírarájender, which is not contained in the extant copy, that was found in the Mercara archives in 1834, and the suspicion lies

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near, that the Canarese original was destroyed and the Testament omitted in the copy by Vírarájender's successors. 175* 643* 428 ●

His last words are:—"On the 7th of the Pushya month (Dec.—Jan.) Ractáxi year (1805) Capt. Mahoney brought the sword, sent by Marquis Wellesley from Bengal and fastened it round the Rájah's waist. In the Mágha month (Jan.—Feb.) 1806 Vírarája told Capt. Mahoney for the information of the Governor General, that on the day of his second marriage, when he sat on the throne with his Ráni, he had determined, that any son of his by this wife should be his successor; that his wife had born him two daughters. If any son be hereafter born of her, he would be the heir; but if it was the will of God, that she should bear no son, then the three sons of his concubine, called Rájashékarappa, Shishushékappa and Chandrashékarappa should succeed to the throne. Since the above date, two more daughters, in all four, have been born by Mahadévaráni who died at 3 o'clock on Sunday the 7th day of the month Jéshta (May—June) 4909 Prabhava year (1807). As by her death the Rájah's hopes of having a son by her were blunted, and he was afraid, lest, if the succession devolved on the sons of another mother, they would create trouble to the four daughters of his lawful queen, the Rájah determined, that of the four daughters, who are named: Dévammáji, Muddammáji, Rájammáji and Mahádévammáji, the eldest should be married and whatever son she might have, he should be named Vírájendra, receive the Rájah's seal and the sword which was presented to him by Marquis Wellesley and be the successor to the throne. If she should, however, have no son, the son of either of her younger sisters according to seniority should be the successor and so long as the line of any of his four above named daughters continued, none of the heirs of the other mother should succeed to the throne; but, upon the family of his four daughters being extinct, the fittest of the above three sons or their posterity should suc- [595]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

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ceed. The Rájah, sensible of the instability of human life and all other things, has thought proper now to determine and record this matter, in order that no wrong may hereafter occur; and he requests, that the English Sirkar will be the guardian of his family and see the execution of the above written will attended to.

"In order that the Rájah's heirs may be acquainted with his resolution, he has written a copy thereof, to which he has affixed his seal and signature and which is lodged in the palace treasury."

Here ends the Rájendranáme.

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5. THE LAST YEARS OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF COORG 1807—1834.

A. DODDA-VÍRÁJENDRA'S MELANCHOLY END. 1807—1809.

With the death of Mahádévaráni commenced the last act, full of blood and horrors of the drama of poor Vírájendra's life. With her his hopes of a son and heir were buried. He had loved her, it appears, passionately. She may have turned and softened the savage nature of the wild Border-Chief. Her loss almost drove him mad. When the paroxysm of his grief had passed, he was alone in the world. There was no one to love him, no one in whom he could confide.

Mahádévaráni had left him four daughters, the eldest of whom was eight years old, when the mother died. They succeeded to whatever remained of human affection and sympathy in the breast of the woe stricken father. He had formerly intended to choose for his successor one of his sons by another wife, if Mahádévaráni had no male issue. Now he changed his mind. One of Mahádévaráni's daughters, if they lived to woman's state, might have a son. That son was to succeed him. The eldest of them, Dévammáji, was betrothed